1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

535 that time I got several of the accompanying songs, the texts of which I hope may be published later. At this time I wish only to point out the important place in the social life of the village which the dance occupies, with reference both to ceremonial and to [821] recreation. Whenever 'the moon makes a basket' (*osaĩ yi tunga ohumba*),[1] there is apt to be a great urge for rhythmic expression. [533] The drums begin to throb, the leader's voice is heard in invitation:

We-lele, we-lele wiya,
Oh light ones, oh light ones, come,
Usiki woñoma Kaluyua.
The beater of the drum (is) Kaluyua.

Then the dancers reply with the same words as a refrain:

We-lele, we-lele wiya,
Usiki woñoma Kaluyua.

The invitation is not given in vain. More and more feet join the shuffling, stamping rhythm, more voices join the chorused invitation; the throbbing mounts as perhaps another drummer or two join in, and soon other songs supersede the invitation now no longer necessary. Dance follows dance, each with its appropriate song, running the gamut of the emotions from ribaldry to pathos, according to the dancers' moods. The dancing will continue nearly all the night and may be resumed on the three or four [527] subsequent nights. After the harvest is gathered and there are no immediate agricultural labours, and if there happens to be little or no government work required at the time or in the region, dances may begin of an afternoon and last through two or three days and nights.

●524 There are a number of games involving either agility or quick wits, or both, which are also played on moonlight nights, both by children and by adolescents. The adults do not join in except in some games which involve dancing. A simple one called *Ka limbua limbua* (Not forgotten) is played by either a large or small group. The children have many games. One which is played either by day or by night, called either *Cimbamba co lia* (The night hawk ate him) or *Mai* (Mother) *Cisungu*, has been fully described by Hambly,[2] with the transcription of its songs arranged by Dr. Herzog.

[1] When the moon is full it 'makes a basket', i.e. is large and round like a field-basket.

[2] Hambly, op. cit., p. 164 f.

1: Childs M-S (1934-1940) 1940 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

On nights when there is little or no moonlight, the evening gatherings in the village sometimes, although not always, follow the sex division, with the men and boys in the *onjango*, and the women and girls at one or more of the kitchens. Discussion of affairs, with youth listening to age, is the usual order, but the time is often passed in the recital of folk-tales or in propounding riddles.

Riddles are more especially a field of youth but age also enjoys hearing the answers given. A favourite occupation of the men, especially by day, is *ocela*, a game known all over Africa and in other parts of the world as well.[1] Junod calls it 'the national game of Africa'.[2]

The Ovimbundu have brought recreation to the service of their work. Europeans are often irritated by the amount of conversation which Ovimbundu carry on during working hours, but on consideration it may be found that were it not for the conversation and other psychological aids, the work might be quite unendurable. This is especially the case with regard to road work and many types of contract labour. Road songs and work songs are of real help in keeping up morale and in prolonging endurance. Most of them seem to have been developed in the days of the caravan trade, but they have not been forgotten and are now used on many occasions.

A word about ceremonial occasions before leaving the social life of the village. Some rites and ceremonies are celebrated so quietly that they are not even social occasions. Most of them, however, are very social. This is especially true of funerals and post-mortuary rites. During visits to Ngendo I was able to witness two post-mortuary rites and the funeral of an important person of a near-by village. Other ceremonial occasions, such as weddings and a return from a trading expedition, also call for much sociability, but funerals and post-mortuary rites are the social occasions which occupy the most time and attention and make for the greatest conviviality.

[1] Known under the name *Mancala*, which is evidently a Bantu word, or taken from one; cf. the Umbundu also *mangala*, to play. Hambly mentions *ocela*, op. cit., p. 219. See also Nevinson, op. cit., p. 91. The *New Standard Dictionary* (Funk and Wagnalls) attributes to Arabian origin both the game and the word *Mankalah*.

[2] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 345 f.

R Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

171 175 wide distribution in Africa (C. Wiedemann, 1909) and the ceremony still survives among the Ovimbundu in modified form.

[114] Though an informative writer, Monteiro is sometimes vague; he says (I, p. 278) that circumcision is a universal custom among the blacks of Angola. In view of the extent of Angola, the diversity of tribes, and the fact that Monteiro traveled over only a small part of the country, this information is misleading.

Monteiro is the only writer in whose works I have found a reference to the Vasele tribe; probably no part of Angola has been so neglected as the Esele country in the hinterland of Novo Redondo. At the present day the Vasele have a reputation for cannibalism.
[266] Monteiro saw human flesh eaten at Cuacra, while the skulls of the victims were placed on adjacent trees. Monteiro states (II, p. 167) that on the death of a king the Mucelis (Vasele) put out all the fires in the kingdom; these were relighted by the succeeding king who
[321] used fire produced by rubbing two sticks together. The flat beads of shell called *dongos*, made from *Achatina monsteryia* (II, p. 168), are made today and traded to the far south of Angola, where their novelty assures them a value far beyond their intrinsic worth. I was fortunate in obtaining an example of the old beheading ax mentioned by Monteiro (II, p. 157) and sketched by Cavazzi (p. 210). Par-
[262] boiled and roasted rats were offered to me as food; Monteiro mentions the offering of a roasted rat on a skewer (I, p. 99).

The account of Commander V. L. Cameron, who left Zanzibar for his journey across Africa in 1873, mentions several points of anthropological importance in relation to the Angolan section of his
[756] journey. Cameron saw a net-covered medicine-man of the Kibokue (Vachokue) wearing a mask and a kilt of grass (p. 384). The function
• [524] of this man was to frighten devils from the woods. The contest in which boys discharge their arrows at a rolling root was seen by Cameron near Kagnombe (Cangamba?). Skulls of victims killed in
[797] war were spiked on poles (p. 399). The diviner was followed by attendants who struck iron gongs, while the diviner himself shook a rattle made of basket-work in the form of a dumb-bell (p. 404). Cameron gives an accurate description of the divination basket and its use without going into details. These I have been able to supply
[482] (chapter IX). The explorer met caravans of Bihéans, renowned carriers then as they are today. They were usually drunk and abusive; in some instances they attempted to rob the stragglers.
000 The use of caterpillars as food is noted (p. 416): "A man cut open

3. Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

114 trative posts. I agree that people between Caconda and Huila
101 represent a racial mixture of the Ovimbundu and the Ovambo. The record speaks of painting-houses for girls at Cabinda, an item which agrees with reports from other sources. The jottings concerning tribes from Cabinda to the far south of Angola are too vague to be used in ethnological work with confidence.

There are many points on which the work of A. Schachtzabel should be consulted for the purpose of making comparisons with my [621] own observations. The chief of these are a note and photograph on [291] village construction (p. 130); the musical bow (p. 32); the loom [175] (plate VI); transmigration of the soul of a chief into an animal (p. 51); [549] and the game of mancala (p. 52). My observations of initiation at [911] Katoko, Ngalangi, and Cangamba agree well with that of Schachtzabel at Katoko, but I was able to obtain more detail and more [283] numerous photographs of the ritual of initiation. The spinning of cotton (p. 143) is exactly the process so frequently witnessed now at Elende. Iron-working (p. 111) appears to be comparable with the technique at Elende, but Schachtzabel seems to have missed the ritual. I was not so fortunate as this author in finding the old type of iron-smelting furnace in use.

114 The work of Statham is devoted primarily to hunting and descrip-
136 tions of plant and animal life. The chapter given to a casual description of people among whom he passed is not useful as ethnology; but the book is of service in providing a background of natural history. Information on the tsetse fly in Angola (p. 294) assists ethnological work by showing the determining effect of this biological factor. [231] Presence of the fly is prohibitive to cattle-keeping, therefore cattle are not kept along the river courses which are infested with this pest.

114 Alexander Barns made no pretence of writing more than a travel book; nevertheless he publishes photographs of ethnological value, gives useful historical summaries, and deals with economic problems of production and transportation.

114 Tucker's book "Drums in the Darkness," though written to
175 interest the American public in mission work, contains many ethnological statements. The chief of these relate to the structure of the compound (p. 37); the dress of women (p. 39); naming of twins and triplets; and other items which agree well with data from the district in which I worked. There are notes on drum signals (p. 74) and [202] cannibalism (p. 77). Apparently drum signals were in use at Bihé half a century ago. Forty years ago a slave was killed and eaten [266] at the installation ceremonies for a new king, a point that was noted

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

825 Observation of reptiles is a necessary self-protection as there are many poisonous snakes. The flesh of the python is eaten. Snake-
[524] skin and lizard-skin are occasionally used; for example, in covering a round, hard fruit in order to make a ball for playing a game.

When collecting lizards and snakes I found that each kind had a well-known name, though there was occasional disagreement among the men consulted.

Ocisanjoko is a lizard (*Agama planiceps*) about ten inches long whose tail is covered with sharp spines. This reptile has colors of bright blue, red, and orange. *Osanju* is a large spinous gray lizard (*Agama atricoll*). *Ekanjola* (*Gerrhosaurus nigrolineatus*) is a brilliantly colored lizard which burrows deeply into the ground.

Olutanjila is a long slender green snake which hides in trees to capture birds. *Ombandanjila* is a long gray-backed snake with a light green belly. The generic name for snake is *onyoka*. The python is *omoma*. The chameleon (*olokalo*) seems to be feared, as the men and boys refuse to touch a dead one but always move it with sticks. There is a proverb to the effect that the chameleon though slow always gets there. The refusal to touch even dead reptiles is due to an exaggerated fear of being bitten. I could find no other reason.

824 Trees are of importance in connection with building houses and
313 wood-carving. The qualities of different timbers are well known to the Ovimbundu. For the main part, the collection of medicinal plants and their uses will be described in connection with the medicine-man. The following are the most common trees which are of economic importance.

Usio (pronounced *osoka*). This tree has an edible fruit the size of a walnut. The kernel is valued as a food.

Ombala. This tree provides wood which burns readily. The small skin-covered stools to be found in every hut are often made from this wood.

Ukanga. The fruit has a hard rind.

[751] *Ovinde*. This tree has a small acid fruit from which a medicine is made for the cure of painful menstruation.

Usilasila. The leaf is compound and palmate. The fruit is black.

Usisambisambia. Bears a little red, oval fruit.

Usoio. Has a large red fruit.

Usonka. Grows near streams. It has a fruit like that of *okalakala*, but smaller.

[723] *Ukalilanga*. Has a fruit like the berry of a coffee plant. The fruit is used for making mucilage which is used for capturing small birds.

Omunda. When this tree is small, the wood is springy, and is therefore useful for making bows. The wood of the older trees is burned for preparing charcoal which is used in the blacksmith's fire.

Omunda. This is an erect tree having no branches on the lower part. The wood is extensively used in building native huts.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

576 *kosyimo oko* are spoken. The literal interpretation of these words is "back there." Ngonga says the words actually mean "excuse my back."

827 576 Spitting in the vicinity of the house of the king or of the chief is not allowed. "If you did that in the old days, you would have to pay something." Some people spit near the hearth in their own houses. A man who spits in the road is expected to cover the spittle. No person would spit in the presence of the chief or of the king. A hand should be placed in front of the mouth by a person who is coughing or sneezing.

576 [851] Shortly after the birth of a boy or girl all who are on good terms with the parents greet them by saying *kalunga*. The word is repeated four times with clapping of the palms. When words have been imperfectly heard and the listener desires repetition it is customary to say *kuku* in an interrogative tone.

[264] No particular etiquette is observed when eating. Two or three children eat from one platter, helping themselves with their fingers to the mush or sweet potatoes.

Rules forbidding the preparation of food by menstruating women, likewise prohibitions relating to stepping over a person, are mentioned in discussing taboos and omens.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF PLAY, MUSIC, AND DANCING

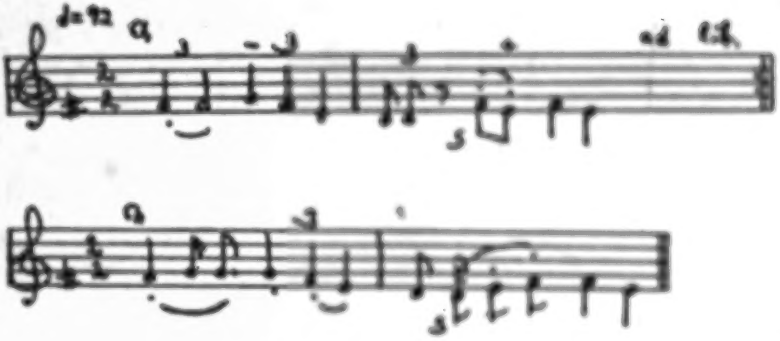
524 182 533 The educational value of play lies in its imitation of the pursuits of adult life. Though there are specialists in music, dancing, and singing, these exercises are indulged in by everyone. Music, singing, and dancing are more than amusements, they are fundamental as coordinating forces in tribal life at all levels of culture (W. D. Hambly, Tribal Dancing and Social Development, London, 1926). [113]

Among the Ovimbundu *Cimbombo Co Lia* is a popular game for girls, who form a circle, join hands, and sing:

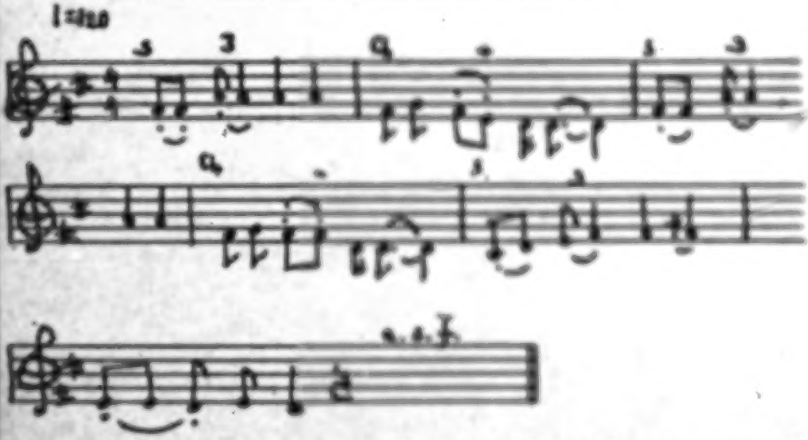
PART I

524 [535] *Omola una, ndo sile sekango, Cimbombo co lia* ("That little child was left in the desert, the nighthawk ate it"). At the word *Cimbombo* they begin to dance, facing from side to side in such a manner that they meet and bow. Some sing, *Cimbombo co lia* ("The nighthawk ate him"), and others respond, *Kalikisi* ("'tis the goblins"), as many times as they wish. Finally a return is made to the first words which are sung again. All musical transcriptions have been made by Dr. G. Herzog from my phonographic records.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mkunda FP13

524 [533]

PART II

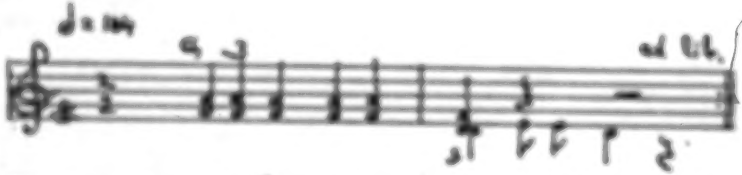
The children then form in a line holding each other. The leader is the mother and all the others are her children, except one who is the leopard. The last child in the line calls, *A mai, engwe yi ndio* ("Mother, the leopard will eat me"). Mother, *Ka yi ku li*, ("It will not eat you"). Child, *Yi lia utapi wosuwa* ("It is eating the water carrier"). Mother, *Ka yi ku li*. Child, *Yi lia utiotki wolokui*. Mother, *Ka yi ku li*. The one who represents the leopard now attempts to pass the outstretched arms of the mother in order to catch the child. Every time the leopard is foiled in his attempt to catch the child they all cry, *Ah-ah-ah Ka yi ku li*.

[533]

Eventually the leopard gets the last child and deposits it on the ground where it immediately begins to imitate the pounding of meal and to sing, *Fule, fule, fule, fule, kolokwala ko Luwa* ("Pound, pound, pound, pound on the rocks of Luwa"). This ditty, which is sung by women during their daily occupation of pounding maize on the

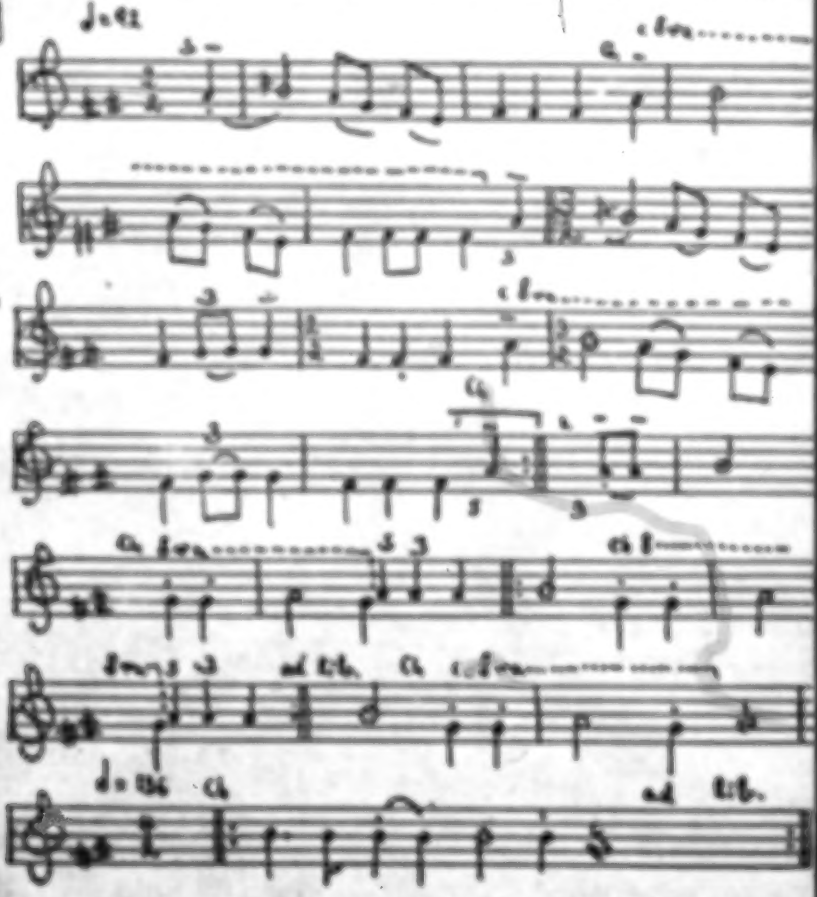
3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

524 rocks, is repeated until all the children have been captured. Lastly the mother is caught and taken by the leopard to the bushes, where he hides her.

[533]



The leopard goes back and picks up a handful of sand which is an imitation of meal. Each of the children pretends to pick up a handful of sand before going in search of the mother. The leopard

[533]

3: Hambly E-6 (1929-1930) 1934 FF13 Mbundu FF13

says, "Here's your mother." The children look and sing, "She's not there." They throw sand in that direction. The leopard repeatedly leads to places where the mother is not hidden, while each time the same words are repeated and sand is thrown. Finally the leopard leads the children to the place where the mother is hidden. Then the mourning song is changed to a glad dance. The children clap hands and sing, *Mai Cisangu weye*. *Mai Cisangu weye* ("Mother Cisangu has come"). 524 ●

After transcribing the music of this song Dr. Herzog reported, "The melodies are rather simple, moving within a restricted range, with a plain rhythm, the same short unassuming melodic fragment being repeated as long as the game may require it, or changed slightly to suit the words. It should be kept in mind that these are children's songs; other songs of the Ovimbundu are probably much more elaborate. The manner of singing songs by a solo and a responding choir is highly characteristic of African singing. Thirds as seen in the transcriptions on page 218 are often used in the music of west Africa. 533

"In the musical notations, *S* stands for Solo, *Ch* for the Choir. *A* as a sign above a note indicates that the tone is sung approximately a quartertone higher than noted. It indicates a short transitional tone of slight rhythmic or melodic significance and of uncertain pitch."

There is but one example of children's dolls in Field Museum's collection. This was obtained from a little Ocimbundu girl of Elende. The doll is made from a corncob which is draped in blue cloth of European origin such as women wear. My interpreter said that the dressing of dolls made from corncobs is a general custom at the time of cutting the corn. In view of the frequent occurrence of agricultural rites among Bantu Negroes, the use of dolls led me to inquire into the possibility of there being some kind of fertility cult associated with a corn-mother concept, but my inquiries met with negative results. 524 [241]

There is an Umbundu word for game (*omapolo*; plural, *olomapolo*) which is used for games in general. The verb *oku papola* means "to play." As a rule, male adults do not play games, but they have the game of mancala which is called *ocela*. This is difficult because it involves quick counting. Mancala has a wide distribution as shown by the fact that it occurs in Africa, Syria, the Malay Archipelago, South America, and the West Indies. At Dom Manuel in the southeast of Angola I saw an arrangement of holes in the ground which was used for this game. There were four rows of fourteen holes in each row. The counters were nuts from an oil palm. [171]

524 In the compound of the king at Ngalangi there was an occ board consisting of an oval piece of wood on a short base. Thi board had holes arranged in four rows of seven, twenty-eight hole [525] in all. The king refused to sell the board. He said that it wa highly valued and that the gambling stakes were high.

Up to the age of sixteen years boys play the game of *ocitika*. Each side has a number of bulbs from a figwort, which are rolle along between two lines of boys who shoot at them with arrows. The winners are those who have shot the greater number of thei opponents' bulbs. The party *A* rolls bulbs while the opponents *A* do the shooting. Then the positions are reversed. A game with whipping tops is *ongolili* which is said to be of Umbundu origin not a derivative from a Portuguese game. There is no evidence that games are seasonal; any game may be played at any time.

Games of mimicry naturally form a diversion, and boys imitate the occupations of their elders. The chief activities of adult males are warfare, hunting, and carrying, all of which used to play a very important part in the communal life up to a few years ago. When boys play at making war they have two sides, the attack and the defense. The attacking party runs about the village taking prisoners, who are tied with bark rope. Girls sometimes play this and other games with the boys, but usually boys and girls play separately.

Sometimes strong boys are selected for hunters whose dogs are the little boys. Boys who pretend to be the antelopes or other game go to the tall grass to hide. Toy bows and arrows are made, but sometimes the hunters go through only the movements of shooting. The boys who are pretending to be the game roll over and gasp when shot. The "dead game" has to cling to the pole on which it is borne to the village on the shoulders of the hunters. The little boys go along on all fours barking like dogs.

The Ovimbundu were, and still are, renowned carriers whose prowess is imitated in boys' games. Boys make up loads in the correct way; that is, lashed in the fork of two long sticks which can be rested on the ground. These they carry along, singing as they go. There is some wrestling, also stone throwing to test distance and accuracy. Rubber is made into a ball which is bounced rapidly and repeatedly with the open palm. Men and boys sometimes form a ring around which the ball is thrown from one person to another.

The Ovimbundu have no game played with string wound around the fingers, and I have been unable to find any evidence for the past or present formation of string figures. I have seen boys making bird

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbunda FP13

cages and wooden animals to use as playthings. Girls mold small animals from clay. The bull-roarer is in use as a plaything at Elende. 524 ●

There is a game of hide and seek for boys. A knife is hidden; then a boy who has been absent for a time enters the ring marked off for the game. His proximity to the knife is indicated by playing on a musical bow. There are taps on the instrument which mean that the knife is far away. On the contrary, when the searcher approaches the hidden knife, the boy with the bow plays a distinctive note, yelala, yelala, meaning "pick it up, pick it up."

Boys readily make a simple apparatus for playing a game of lassoing a hoop. A pliable branch is bent so as to form a circle, then the ends are lashed together with bark strips. The lasso is a piece of rattan or bark having at each end a corncob or a small stick three inches long. One boy bowls the hoop so that it passes in front of, and a few feet away from his opponent, who stands twenty-five feet distant. As the hoop passes in front of him, the boy throws his lasso in such a way that it twines round the hoop and brings it to the ground.

There are dances of many kinds, but Ngonga says that he would not know from the steps only what particular purpose the dance served. Several dances have been described, each in its appropriate section. There are no dances specially arranged to celebrate weddings or births. The funeral dance is described along with other ceremonies relating to interment. The medicine-man dances in connection with making rain or curing the sick. In order to say why the dance was being performed, it would be necessary to listen to the words of the songs; these are usually chanted in accompaniment to shuffling movements and the rhythm of drums. 535 [789]

Some of the older men and women perform dances and sing songs that are unknown to the younger generation. Dancing is in favor during the months of May and June because there are supplies of maize for making beer. As the dry season advances the maize formerly available for making beer is consumed as food, hence dancing is not so usual. Ngonga says that the old people know a dance which should be performed at new moon "so that there will be no sickness during this moon." Older men dance in commemoration of events during past wars, while women are spectators, and on these occasions there are beer-drinking and the slaughter of an ox. A group of men keeps up a shuffling dance while an old man relates a war story in a singsong voice. The oldest man is the first to cut the meat, after which each man helps himself. 535 527 [727]

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbunda FP13

(9) Four fingers of the right hand are placed on the thumb of the extended left hand. 201

(10) The hands are placed together palm to palm.

A very insulting sign is made in this way. The left arm is held up with the fist closed. The left wrist is grasped with the right hand. The left fist is then shaken while the right hand is still grasping the left wrist. "This is done when a man is very angry, and he cannot find words."

A bending forward of the head accompanied by wide opening of the eyes and protrusion of the tongue means "you're a fool."

Shaking the head means "no." If the right hand is shaken in front of the face with the index finger extended, a negative is implied. Nodding the head is an affirmative sign. To indicate absence of anything, or the completion of something, the index finger of the right hand is drawn across the mouth. Rubbing the palms together rapidly has the same significance. In order to call some one the right arm is extended with the palm down. If they summon some one from a distance the arm is lowered, while a scratching movement is made with the fingers. The sign indicating "go away" is a flipping of the hand outwardly, while the arm is extended.

[530] 524 539

RIDDLES AND PROVERBS

"There is a red belt round our field. What is it?" The answer is, "red ants."

"We have somebody who lies all his life in our field. He always lies on one side." The answer is, "a squash."

"We have a stump in the house that is always burning and always moving." This is a metaphor rather than a riddle. The stump is the log which is pushed forward into the fire. It is always alive yet is gradually dying. The saying is intended to refer to human lives. People are alive but their lives are becoming shorter each day.

"What is it that we eat above and below the ground?" The answer is, "manioc, because the leaves and roots are eaten."

"The turtle cannot climb up on a stump, some one has to put it there." This is said in reference to some person who gains a high position which he could attain only by influence and not through merit. 539

When a person makes threats without being able to fulfil them the following expressions are appropriate: "Hot water does not

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30)1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

At Cacouda I obtained the basket of a medicine-man which contained 759
a human tibia, a hoe for digging in graves, and a round stone for pounding 791
the bone before mixing it with fat and charcoal. Medicine-men still make potions for internal use, and these are usually carried in small horns suspended round the neck, or the paste may be contained in the carapace of a tortoise. In every way the medicine-man is still functioning, and his tasks are fundamental to the social and religious life of the Ovimbundu.

At an early age children specialize in their play which has a bearing 868
on the business of life. Boys make wooden-tipped arrows, play at hunting, and shoot at tubers which are rolled along the ground. Girls take clay from the potters to fabricate their own small cooking pots, and young girls attempt the coiling of basketry.

Men are the musicians, and among these a high degree of specialization 533
is observed. In a large village there are likely to be only a few competent drummers, and only a few men who play the small iron-keyed instrument called ocisanji. Osaka is a ritual game played only by men, and only when a village headman or a king is dying. The ball (ombunje) is made by sewing 535
lizard skin over a hard spherical fruit about six centimeters in diameter. A 524
man continues to dance with this little ball clenched in his outstretched 755
hand, while another dancer hits the muscles of his arm to make him release the ball. This game is thought to give strength to the sick man. There is a transfer of the endurance of the dancers to the invalid.

Preliminary observation in some villages occupied by Ovimbundu is 177
disappointing in its suggestion of Europeanization. The foreign culture is, however, a thin veneer, and further research shows a strong persistence of indigenous custom and belief quite near to centers of Portuguese influence.

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS